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Supplemental Benefits: Survivor Benefit Plan

COMMANDERS DIGEST

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At White House Signing Ceremony

President, Sec. Laird, Laud Survivors Bill

On the occasion of the signing of H.R. 10670—the "Survivor Benefits for Military Retirees" bill (Public Law 92-425)—at the White House September 21, President Richard Nixon introduced Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird, who explained some of the details of the new legislation.

Mr. Nixon said: ". . . Many times we sign bills that have an enormous effect on people, but very few people in the Nation are aware of it; very few people, really, would seem to care.

"This happens to be one of those bills that will go unnoticed, except for the fact that there are Members of the House [of Representatives], Members of the Senate, who have felt strongly for many, many years that an inequity ought to be corrected. The bill came to my desk. When I saw it, I suggested that we invite down Members of the House and the Senate, Republicans and Democrats, who have supported this legislation."

Mr. Nixon then called on Mr. Laird, saying, "In order that the Nation will know that a Government can be responsive to an inequity, an inequity involving men and women who have served in our Armed Forces, and their survivors, I thought the Secretary of Defense could take a few minutes to explain this bill. Mr. Secretary."

Mr. Laird noted that H. R. 10670 is "significant in the lives of the families of 900,000 military people who have already retired. They have an opportunity to qualify for the survivors' benefits under the terms of the bill.

"In addition to that, it affects the families and the lives of the men and women of the military service who are currently serving in our Armed Forces. They have an opportunity to be treated as other civilian workers in Government have been treated, members of the Foreign Service have been treated, for many years.

"For 25 years, the House and Senate Armed Services Committees have been considering legislation along this line. It was through the efforts of the House and Senate committees, and the bipartisan support on the Floor of the House and Senate, that this legislation is a reality today. I would like to express the appreciation not only of our Commander-in-Chief, but of those of us in the Defense Department who are working for an all-volunteer force for our Army, our Air Force, our Navy and our Marine Corps, that these military men are involved in a very real sense in a different way, because of their separation from their families during their careers in the military service, and this means a great deal to them because it is the support of their families that makes it possible for them to do the kind of job that is so necessary in the defense of freedom in the world and in making possible our efforts and our objective of peace throughout the world.

"So, on behalf of all of us in the Department of Defense, I would like to express to all of you from the Congress our appreciation for making this opportunity available not only to the 900,000 that have already retired from military service, but to all those men and women who are currently taking part in the defense of our country and serving in the Armed Forces," the Defense Secretary said.

The President then concluded:

"But most important of all, we have to remember that what the men and women who serve in our Armed Services really need more than anything else is respect. Whatever we pay them, whatever survivor benefits we provide, certainly should be equivalent to what they could do in civilian life, but the respect must come from all of the American people for those who serve in our Armed Forces. The fact that so many of you have come down from the House and Senate today not only indicates your interest in this legislation, but it indicates that on a bipartisan front we respect the men and women who serve America all over the world, in war and peace."

Public Law 92-425

New Program Improvement Over RSFPP

A new program that assures financial protection for survivors of retired Uniformed Services members* was signed by President Richard Nixon September 21, 1972, as Public Law 92-425.

The Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), as it is called, provides survivor income of up to 55 percent of the retired pay of retirees to their widows or widowers and dependent children.

In the past, surviving members of retirees' families often found themselves with little or no income following the retirees' deaths. The new SBP fills that gap in the area of service benefits. Until passage of the new law, the retired pay of a retired member of the Uniformed Services ended with his death, unless he had elected voluntarily to participate in the Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan (RSFPP)—known originally as the Contingency Option Act.

* Members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and members of the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"If we are to attract the quality member to a military career, we must be able to offer him and his dependents a compensation system with the financial security afforded members of other systems. The survivor benefit plan for military retirees supports this objective.

"In fact, I consider it to be one of the most important pieces of legislation ever introduced for career military personnel."

—**Army Lieutenant General Leo E. Benade, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Military Personnel Policy),** before the Subcommittee on Survivor Benefits, Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, August 8, 1972

Members of the Uniformed Services who retire on or after the September 21, 1972, effective date will be automatically enrolled in the plan if they have spouses or dependent children at retirement time.

A member who does not have a spouse or dependent child at retirement time can elect either to join in the plan at that time by naming another person as beneficiary, or to begin participation later, if he or she acquires a spouse or child after retiring.

The Survivor Benefit Plan is open to members of the Reserve components, including members of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard, in addition to the active duty career members.

Uniformed Services members who were already retired on the SBP's effective date also are eligible to participate in the plan. Their participation is not automatic, however. They must voluntarily elect to come under the plan, and they have one year in which to do so.

The cost to retirees of SBP participation is withheld from their retired pay. (Note: There is no cost to any member of the Uniformed Services until he receives or is entitled to receive retired or retainer pay.)

The Federal Government pays a substantial part of the overall SBP cost. Consequently, reductions of retired pay for SBP

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participation by retired members are considerably lower than those required for the same survivor protection under the program it replaces—the Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan. (Note: Alternatives for persons who had signed up for RSFPP are discussed on page 7.)

The Survivor Benefit Plan is modeled after the post-retirement survivor protection program for career Civil Service employees.

Present Widow Benefits

The new plan also has a special provision benefiting women who are now widows of deceased members of the Uniformed Services who were receiving, or were entitled to receive, retired pay. The provision assures these widows of annual incomes of at least $2,100. A widow who is entitled to a Veterans Administration (VA) widow's pension or equivalent payment and whose income is less than $1,400 per year will be able to receive an SBP supplemental payment to bring her income up to that figure. The VA pension based on this amount, when added to $1,400, will result in a combined total of about $2,100 per year.

A woman who is widowed during SBP's first year of operation and whose retired husband did not, or could not, elect to participate in the plan, also would be eligible for the SBP payment to bring her annual income up to $2,100.

SBP survivor payments, other than to women who are widows on the day of enactment, are based on the retired pay to which the retiree is entitled at the time of death, *not* that initially received when the retiree began participation in SBP, either automatically or voluntarily. Also, SBP survivor payments will be increased periodically to keep pace with increases in the Consumer Price Index.

There is no difference in member cost between those who retire after the effective date of SBP—September 21, 1972—

and those who were already retired on that date. Changes in member cost will occur when retired pay is increased to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index, and the withholding will be increased accordingly.

Beneficiaries

The class of beneficiary to be protected is the factor that determines the cost to the retired member of the Uniformed Services of providing survivor protection through SBP. There are four such classes:

- Spouse only,
- Spouse and dependent child or children,
- Dependent child or children only, and
- Other person with an insurable interest in the retiree (not a spouse or still-dependent child).

As SBP applies equally to those who retire after its effective date and those who were already retired at that time, its basic details can best be described in relationship to the four survivor categories it is designed to protect.

Spouse Only

The basic protection provided by SBP is for the spouse who will survive a retired member of the Uniformed Services. Participation by the member and protection for his or her spouse is automatic, if the retirement takes place on or after September 21, 1972, and is voluntary if the retirement took place before that date.

Eligibility. For the purpose of SBP, a surviving spouse eligible to receive SBP payments is a widow or widower who was either:

- Married to a retiree at the time of his or her retirement,
- Married to the deceased retiree for at least two years before his or her death, or
- The parent of a child born of the marriage to the deceased retiree.

(Note: Unlike some other Government survivor benefit programs, the widower of a deceased woman retiree is not required under SBP to be dependent upon the woman retiree.)

Cost. In order to provide maximum protection, spouse-only survivor payments of 55 percent of his or her retired pay, a retiree gives up a small part of that retired pay.

The cost formula is 2½ percent of the first $300 of the monthly retired pay, plus 10 percent of the remainder of that pay, for maximum protection.

For the enlisted member who retires now as an E-7 with 20 years' service, retired pay is about $350 per month. He can plan on providing spouse-only, maximum-protection payments of about $192 at a cost of $12.50, which is withheld from his retired pay.

An officer retiring now in pay grade O-5 after 20 years' service with about $762 monthly retired pay can provide a spouse-only survivor payment of $419 at a cost of $53.70, withheld from his monthly retired pay.

Although the automatic-in provision calls for spouse-only protection to be based on a retiree's full retired pay, he can select a lesser amount to be used as the base amount or can decline to participate. However, a retiring member who selects a lesser amount, or declines participation, must put that decision in writing 30 days prior to the first day he or she can receive retired pay. The minimum base amount allowed is $300, which provides a benefit of $165 at a cost of $7.50. (Note: Reductions in retired pay to provide spouse-only SBP protection continue for the life of the retiree.)

TABLE 1. SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN: SPOUSE ONLY

Examples of monthly payments and reductions in retired pay for Spouse-Only SBP

Retired Pay Base Amount	Monthly Payment For Spouse Only	Monthly Cost To Retiree
$ 100.00*	$ 55.00	$ 2.50
200.00*	110.00	5.00
300.00	165.00	7.50
350.00	192.50	12.50
400.00	220.00	17.50
450.00	247.50	22.50
500.00	275.00	27.50
550.00	302.50	32.50
600.00	330.00	37.50
650.00	357.50	42.50
700.00	385.00	47.50
750.00	412.50	52.50
800.00	440.00	57.50
850.00	467.50	62.50
900.00	495.00	67.50
950.00	522.50	72.50
1,000.00	550.00	77.50
1,100.00	605.00	87.50
1,200.00	660.00	97.50
1,300.00	715.00	107.50
1,400.00	770.00	117.50
1,500.00	825.00	127.50
1,600.00	880.00	137.50
1,700.00	935.00	147.50
1,800.00	990.00	157.50
1,900.00	1,045.00	167.50
2,000.00	1,100.00	177.50
2,100.00	1,155.00	187.50

* Can be used only if full retired pay is less than $300 per month.

Save-Pay Provision. If a member of the Uniformed Services who remains on extended active duty beyond the minimum time to be eligible for retired pay dies in line of duty, his widow is entitled to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) monthly payments from the Veterans Administration. If the DIC payments are less than the maximum SBP payments the widow (or dependent widower) would have received if the member had been retired, SBP payments covering the difference between the two would be paid. (See Table 2, Page 7, for DIC payments.)

This save-pay provision is designed to eliminate any possible penalty for the dependents of career members who remain on active duty after they are eligible to retire.

Spouse and Child or Children

The basic survivor protection provided a spouse under SBP is broadened when the retiree also has a dependent child or children when he comes under SBP either automatically or through choice. The full SBP payment can flow to the eligible child or children, if the spouse predeceases the retiree or ceases to receive the SBP payments because of remarriage or death.

Eligibility. For SBP purposes, a child must be a dependent, that is, must be unmarried and under 18, or else under 22 if attending a full-time education or training course. However, a child of any age is "dependent" if suffering from an incapacitating physical or mental condition that existed prior to age 18 or that was suffered before age 22 in the case of a child attending full-time education or training.

A "dependent child" can be a deceased retiree's natural child through a current or prior marriage, an adopted child, a stepchild, a foster child, or a recognized natural child living in a regular parent-child relationship with the retiree at the time of death. A foster child must be residing with the retiree at the time of death and must be receiving at least one-half of his support from the retiree. In addition, a foster child can not be cared for under a social agency contract.

Cost. Present and future retirees providing SBP protection for a spouse and child or children pay a spouse-only cost, plus a small additional cost averaging about one-half of one percent of the members' retired pay on which it is based.

The part of the reduction in retired pay that is the cost for dependent child protection continues only as long as there is at least one child remaining as an eligible beneficiary.

Child or Children Only

SBP provides automatic participation for Uniformed Services members who retire on or after September 21, 1972, with a dependent child or children but no spouse. Those already retired before that date can elect to participate, and have one year in which to sign up. This participation provides full protection to their dependent children as long as they remain eligible.

Eligibility. The eligibility qualifications for children of retirees without spouses are the same as for those of retirees who have both spouses and children. (See Spouse and Child or Children, above.)

Cost. A special children's cost will be withheld from the retiree's retired pay. This will be a specified rate, with the cost computed in each case on the age of the retiree and the age of the youngest child covered. The cost generally will be about three percent of the retired pay on which it is based.

Reductions in retired pay continue only as long as at least one child remains an eligible beneficiary.

Other Persons with Insurable Interest

A member of the Uniformed Service who has neither a spouse nor a dependent child when he retires can elect immediate participation by naming a person other than a spouse or child as his or her beneficiary under the SBP insurable-interest provision.

He or she also has the option of foregoing or delaying participation in SBP until such time as he or she acquires a spouse or dependent child later in retirement. The retiree has one year after acquiring a spouse or dependent child to initiate participation to provide survivor payments for the spouse and/or child by notifying his Service in writing.

A retiree's immediate participation in favor of a person with an insurable interest in him or her can later be switched to coverage for a spouse and/or child acquired after retirement. The retiree has one year after acquiring a spouse and/or child to change his or her participation in favor of the spouse and/or child. He must notify his Service in writing of his new election.

Eligibility. An insurable-interest beneficiary is any person who has a bona fide financial interest in the continued life of the SBP participant, that is, who stands to realize some financial gain during the life of the retiree. The family or other relationship of such a person to the retiree can vary as individual circumstances can vary.

A member or retiree who needs assistance in determining whether or not naming an insurable-interest beneficiary would be a wise decision, and in selecting such a beneficiary, can get personal counseling at his or her personnel or personal affairs office.

Cost. The cost for insurable-interest participation is different and somewhat higher than the basic spouse-only cost. It is 10 percent of the retiree's *full* retired pay, plus an additional

5 percent for each full five years the beneficiary is younger than the retiree. However, the total cost or reduction cannot exceed 40 percent of the retired pay. A retiree cannot elect less than the full amount of retired pay as the base amount to be used under the insurable-interest provision.

The survivor payment is 55 percent of the retired pay remaining after it is reduced by the cost of providing for the survivor payment.

The reduction in retired pay for insurable-interest participation continues throughout the life of the participating retiree, unless he or she acquires a spouse and/or child and changes his or her SBP participation to provide protection for them.

180-Day Grace Period

Any member of the Uniformed Services who retires within the 180-day period after the Survivor Benefit Plan went into effect (from September 21, 1972, through March 20, 1973) has a special grace period in which to make his or her final decision concerning SBP participation.

The grace period itself also is 180 days—counting from the retiree's first day of entitlement to retired pay.

During the grace period, a newly retired member who was automatically enrolled in SBP at retirement to provide survivor protection for a spouse and/or dependent child may withdraw from the plan or choose less than maximum-protection participation. A retiree who could have elected insurable-interest participation at retirement but did not do so still can pick up this coverage within the 180-day grace period.

Surviving Spouse Remarriage Rights

A widow or widower who is receiving SBP payments can remarry at age 60 or later and continue to receive those payments.

A widow or widower who remarries younger than age 60 loses entitlement to SBP payments. However, if that marriage ends in death, divorce or annulment, entitlement can be restored. (Note: A person who had been married to two deceased retirees, both of whom were participants in SBP, can choose between the two survivor payment entitlements, selecting the more advantageous of the two.)

Declining or Reducing Participation

At the time of his retirement, a member of the Uniformed Services can elect either to reduce the amount of his retired pay on which a spouse and/or children's survivor payments are based, or to decline to participate at all. In either instance, he would have to advise his or her Service in writing of the decision 30 days before the first day for which he or she can receive retired pay.

If a member with only a dependent child or children (but no spouse) at retirement declines to participate at that time, he or she can enter the plan later upon acquiring a spouse or another child.

A retiree who had declined SBP protection for a spouse at the time of retirement cannot later enter SBP to protect another spouse acquired later in retirement.

Most Decisions Irrevocable

The only person who can make a change in his or her SBP participation after it is in effect (other than one who has the 180-day grace period) is one who elects into the plan under the insurable-interest provision and later switches the coverage to protect a spouse and/or a child acquired after retiring.

A member retiring on or after September 21, 1972, with automatic coverage to protect a spouse and/or a child, cannot withdraw from the plan once his participation is in effect.

Similarly, a member already retired before September 21, 1972, who elects to participate in SBP and covers a spouse, cannot withdraw.

There are only three circumstances in which the retiring or already retired person would not be strongly encouraged to participate in SBP at the maximum level. They are:

- When the retiring member has taken other obviously adequate measures to provide survivor protection for his or her spouse and/or dependent children;
- When total family assets are so substantial that part of the member's retired pay is not needed to assure adequate protection for the survivors; or
- When the retiree's spouse is near or past age 62, since SBP payments are reduced by social security eligibility of the beneficiary.

Spouse Notified. When a married member of the Uniformed Services retiring on or after September 21, 1972, decides to elect less than maximum protection or declines coverage, the spouse is notified by the Service before the decision—which has to be in writing—is accepted and acted upon.

Other Federal Programs Affect SBP Payments

The SBP monthly payment that can be made to a beneficiary is permanently or temporarily reduced if the beneficiary is entitled to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from the Veterans Administration (VA), and/or social security survivor benefits. Entitlement to Civil Service survivor benefits also affects entitlement to SBP payments.

How SBP survivor payments are affected by these other survivor plans is explained below.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). When a Uniformed Services member dies of a service-connected cause, either while on active duty or in retirement, certain members of his or her family are eligible for monthly DIC payments. These include the widow or dependent widower, dependent children, and in some cases, where income is very low, dependent parents.

Whenever a surviving spouse of an SBP participant is also entitled to DIC payments, the spouse's monthly payment under SBP will be reduced by the amount of the DIC payment. However, VA payment for aid and attendance or for children will not affect the spouse's SBP payment. Nor is the SBP payment affected by the entitlement of a child to VA educational assistance.

The total of the two monthly payments to the spouse—DIC plus SBP—will be equal to the full amount otherwise payable

under SBP. Also, the amount deducted from the retiree's pay that relates to the cost of that part of the SBP payment not paid because of the DIC payment will be refunded to the surviving spouse. (Table 2 shows current DIC payment amounts.)

TABLE 2. CURRENT DIC MONTHLY PAYMENT AMOUNTS
DIC Widow Rates

Pay Grade	Monthly Rate	Pay Grade	Monthly Rate
E-1	$184	W-4	262
E-2	189	O-1	232
E-3	195	O-2	240
E-4	206	O-3	257
E-5	212	O-4	272
E-6	217	O-5	299
E-7	227	O-6	337
E-8	240	O-7	365
E-9	251[a]	O-8	399
W-1	232	O-9	429
W-2	241	O-10	469[b]
W-3	249		

a If the veteran served as Sergeant Major of the Army, Senior Enlisted Advisor of the Navy, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force or Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps at the applicable time designated by Section 402, Title 38, U.S.C., the widow's rate shall be $270.

b If the veteran served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chief of Staff of the Army, Chief of Naval Operations, Chief of Staff of the Air Force or Commandant of the Marine Corps at the applicable time designated by Section 402, Title 38, U.S.C., the widow's rate shall be $503.

The monthly rates of DIC for parents range from $10 to $100, based upon the income of the parents and whether there is only one parent, two parents not living together or two parents together or remarried with spouse. The income limit for two parents together or remarried and with spouse is $3,800; that for one parent or two parents not together is $2,600

Social Security Survivor Payments. Because SBP and social security are both Federal programs and the Government pays part of the cost of both, SBP and social security survivor payments are integrated.

SBP payments to a surviving spouse will be offset by the portion of the spouse's social security survivor payment that is based solely on the deceased retiree's active Federal service after December 31, 1956.

A widow's entitlement to the social security "mother's" survivor payment may temporarily reduce the SBP payment when only one child and the widow are receiving social security payments. However, if the widow is working and her earnings are too high for the "mother's" portion of the social security benefit to be paid, the SBP payments are not reduced. Also, the widow's SBP payments are not reduced when more than one child receives social security benefits.

If SBP survivor payments to a widow are reduced by social security payments, they are restored to the full amount as soon as the family can no longer receive social security benefits because of a child's eligibility. The full payment continues until the widow reaches age 62.

When a widow or widower receiving SBP payment reaches age 62, or when SBP payments begin after age 62, the SBP payments may be permanently reduced because of eligibility at that age for social security survivor benefits. All SBP payments to widows of members retired after 1956 will be affected by the social security offset. For this reason, a man already retired on September 21, 1972—the effective date of SBP—should consider whether his wife has attained age 62 (or is nearing it) in deciding on participation in SBP. Few widowers will have monthly SBP payments reduced at age 62 or later because of the social security offset. This is because only dependent widowers may receive benefits based on a deceased wife's social security coverage.

The amount of children's social security benefits never affects the amount of SBP payments to a widow or to the children.

Civil Service Survivor Payments. SBP survivor payments can not be paid to a survivor of a Uniformed Services retiree who was, or is, also a career Federal Civil Service employee and who has waived entitlement to Service retired pay in favor of receiving more retired pay under the Civil Service retirement plan.

Only if that retiree has advised the Civil Service Commission (CSC) that he or she does not desire survivor protection under the CSC plan can his or her survivor or survivors receive SBP payments.

Regardless of which plan the retiree's survivors do receive payments under, no amount he or she has paid into either plan can be refunded to a surviving spouse.

Alternatives for RSFPP Enrollees

Persons already retired on the effective date of SBP who are participating in the Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan (formerly the Contingency Option Plan) have three options concerning SBP participations.

- They may elect into SBP and continue in RSFPP, with reductions in their retired pay increased as necessary for SBP. However, the combined survivor payments cannot exceed 100 percent of the retiree's retired pay at death.
- They may drop out of RSFPP immediately and elect into SBP, with reductions in retired pay adjusted to cover SBP participation only. Withdrawal from RSFPP normally requires a 6-month waiting period between notification to a Service and cessation of RSFPP reductions in retired pay. However, this provision has been waived for retirees dropping RSFPP and entering SBP. No amount already withheld from retired pay for RSFPP participation is refundable.
- They may continue in RSFPP only, not electing into SBP, with no change in reductions in retired pay.
  (Note: The election for RSFPP participation by members not yet retired from the Uniformed Services who had signed up for it is automatically cancelled when they retire, in favor of SBP coverage.)

Federal Income Tax Implications

Under the Survivor Benefit Plan, deductions from retired Uniformed Services members' retired pay are includable in their gross income for Federal income tax purposes. However, SBP payments to beneficiaries are not counted as part of the beneficiaries' gross income.

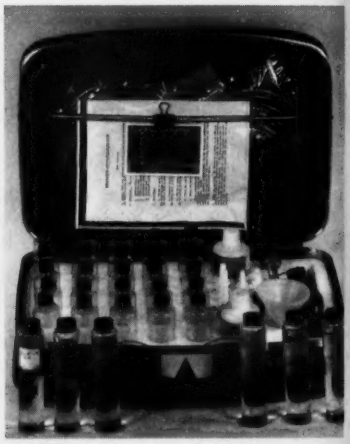
ARMED FORCES INITIATIVES

HEALTH PROJECT. PROJECT BLUE CHIPS is the popular name given to a community health project of the 503d Medical Service Flight, an Air Force Reserve unit stationed at Lockbourne Air Force Base, Ohio. The unit, together with members of the 552nd Medical Service Flight (AFRES), has begun a project of Community Health Improvement Prevention Services (CHIPS) at two community centers in Columbus, Ohio. The project provides medical services one Sunday each month on a continuing basis. Definitive care is not provided; instead, referrals are made to various medical practitioners and facilities. The Columbus Health Department has a follow-up program to insure that those needing care get it.

ECOLOGY PROGRAM. There's an ecology slogan circulating nationally, "Bend a Little—Keep America Beautiful." That was just what soldiers of the 30th Military Police Battalion stationed at the Presidio of San Francisco did recently. Replacing their guns with plastic bags (photo), they launched an attack on litter along portions of the Bay Area's beaches. (Official U.S. Army Photo)

DOMESTIC ACTION. With all the recent interest on moon rocks, not much is being said about earth rocks. One huge earthling rock, believed to be about 450 million years old, made news when it was flown from the Antarctic to the United States recently by the Navy's Antarctic Development Squadron Six (VXE-6). The rock was then donated by the Navy to the Boston Museum of Science, where it is expected to be a major attraction for the museum's new $15 million west wing.

DOMESTIC ACTION. Air Force fire-fighting crews from Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, recently put out a raging fire on a wrecked 100-car freight train 50 miles north of Anchorage—not once but twice. After working through the night with their foam dispensing fire truck, they managed to extinguish the petroleum-fed blaze by early morning. Six hours later, the wreckage was ignited again by workmen trying to move the wreckage and reopen the tracks. Greater Anchorage Fire Marshall Joseph Hildreth complimented the Air Force men for their efforts. (Official U.S. Air Force Photo)



RESEARCH. Thieves had better think twice before siphoning gas out of Army vehicles. To track down stolen gasoline and related oil products, the U. S. Army Land Warfare Laboratory, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, has developed a new method for 'color' coding petroleum products with an invisible dye. The procedure consists of adding a colorless additive to the fuel and subsequent use of an Identification Agent System Kit (above). One gallon of the additive is sufficient for marking 20,000 gallons of fuel. When suspected stolen fuel is discovered, the kit is used to convert the "invisible dye" marker to a visible color. The system is sensitive enough to identify the exact tank from which the fuel was stolen. (Official U.S. Army Photo)

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